

  
**Rushnell Communications &  
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June 14, 1994

Mr. William Caton  
Acting Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N. W.  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: FCC En Banc Hearing on Children's Television  
(MM Docket No. 93-48) June 28, 1994

Dear Mr. Caton:

In connection with my appearance at the FCC en banc hearing on children's television, please find an original and nine copies of my prepared remarks, as well as a summary. Also enclosed are a biography of myself and my company and supportive charts.

Separately I am sending 21 copies of these materials to Mr. Larry Miller in the Video Services Division.

Sincerely,

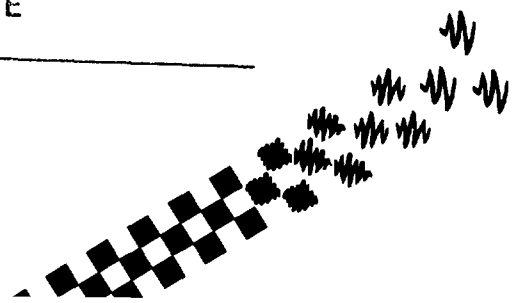


Squire D. Rushnell

cc: Mr. Larry Miller  
Video Services Division  
Mass Media Bureau  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N. W. - Room 702  
Washington, DC 20554

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FCC En Banc Hearing  
on Children's Television  
(MM Docket No. 93-48)  
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Prepared Remarks of  
Squire D. Rushnell  
President, Rushnell Communications & Publishing, Inc.

Contents:

1. Speaker Biography / Description of Organization
2. Summary of Prepared Remarks
3. Prepared Remarks
4. Supportive Charts

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**BIOGRAPHY  
SQUIRE D. RUSHNELL  
PRESIDENT  
RUSHNELL COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLISHING, INC.**

Squire Rushnell, for 20 years a top program executive with the ABC Television Network and Stations, established his own production company, Rushnell Communications & Publishing Inc. in 1990, producing programming for all media.

Primarily known for his work in children's, all family and informational programming, Mr. Rushnell has overseen and produced a broad range of television series, from Good Morning America, to primetime, to late night.

From 1973 to 1989, Mr. Rushnell was Vice President ABC Children's Television a role in which delivered more number one children's schedules than anyone in network history, while also earning a reputation for his advocacy of educational children's television.

Mr. Rushnell oversaw the production of more than 100 hours of ABC Afterschool Specials, which won 57 Emmy awards. His acclaimed ABC Schoolhouse Rock programs integrated educational messages into the Saturday morning schedule, musically teaching young people math, science, english and history.

Mr. Rushnell created the ABC WEEKEND SPECIALS which promoted reading, KIDS ARE PEOPLE TOO, NUTRITION "COMMERCIALS", and many other educational, yet entertaining programs.

His animated musical specials THE KINGDOM CHUMS explain virtues to children. An unqualified success in this country, a recent Russian telecast of THE KINGDOM CHUMS ORIGINAL TOP TEN received 165,000 letters from viewers.

**DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION**

Rushnell Communications & Publishing, Inc. is an independent production company and music publisher located at 640 Fifth Avenue, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10019.

Rushnell Communications & Publishing, Inc. is actively engaged in the development and production of children's programming for network, cable, syndication, CD ROM and home video.

As well, the company produces HAVEN a syndicated talk series starring Joy Philbin; is developing a program concept with Good Morning America and the American Heritage Dictionary; has several movies for television in development, and is involved with a new cable channel for post-49 baby boomers called OUR TV.

SUMMARY OF REMARKS BY SQUIRE D. RUSHNELL  
AT THE JUNE 28, 1994 FCC EN BANC HEARING  
ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

Today I speak to you as the former ABC Vice President of Children's Television, from 1973 to 1989.

In 1973, Action for Children's Television was making broadcasters feel guilty. And ACT was supported by a succession of Whitehouse administrations and FCC's whose unequivocal message was that: *broadcasters must consider television for children as a special responsibility.*

This impetus fostered the "positive evolution in children's television". Verification is a study conducted by my company evaluating two decades of educational children's programming by the commercial networks.

In 1975 the three commercial networks were presenting a combined average of 9 3/4 hours per week of children's programs specifically designed as educational.

By 1980, the combined weekly average grew to 11 1/4 hours.

But 1980 was also the year that the positive evolution ground to a halt. There was change in Washington.

My colleagues and I, with no impetus from Washington, just didn't notice the weeds coming back into the garden of children's television, throughout the 80's.

Most of the effective short-form educational programs died. Children's specials diminished. And by 1990 the three network combined weekly average was down to 1 3/4 hours.

My study for the 1994/95 Children's Season shows that the three original commercial networks will present a combined weekly average of 5 3/4 hours of educational children's programming starting this fall. Add Fox, and the weekly average among the four networks will be up to 9 hours.

Everyone agrees on the power of television to teach.

But I wonder. Is it possible to employ the power of television to help remedy the poor scores of our school children versus 15 other nations?

Is it possible for the FCC to form an advisory task force to serve as a bridge between the commission and broadcasters, to encourage voluntary action?

Is it possible for the FCC to offer tax certificates to those who produce programs which serve specific educational needs of our children?

I volunteer my energies to support such an effort.

PREPARED REMARKS OF SQUIRE D. RUSHNELL  
JUNE 28, 1994  
FCC EN BANC HEARING  
ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

My name is Squire Rushnell, producer of children's and family programming for all media.

Today, however, I speak to you as the former Vice President of Children's Television at ABC, a position I held for 15 years, from 1973 to 1989.

Against this backdrop, I'd like to offer an historical perspective on educational children's programming at the commercial networks.

In 1973, the garden of children's television was overgrown with weeds. Yet, there was hope.

Action for Children's Television was making broadcasters feel guilty. And ACT was supported by a succession of Whitehouse administrations and FCC's whose unequivocal message was that: *Broadcasters must consider television for children as a special responsibility.*

This impetus from The Nixon, Ford & Carter administrations fostered what I called the "positive evolution in children's television".

Verification is a study conducted by my company, evaluating two decades of educational children's programming by the commercial networks.

In 1975 the networks were presenting a combined average of 9 3/4 hours per week of children's programs specifically designed as educational.

By 1980, the combined weekly average grew to 11 1/4 hours.

This high point in children's television included programs on social issues from ABC Afterschool Specials to NBC's Special Treats.

CBS's *In The News*, two minutes every hour, explained concepts like "solar energy".

And, ABC's three minute *Schoolhouse Rock* programs taught math, science, english and history.

Years later, testing the efficacy of these short-form programs is easy. Ask any 30 year old "What's a conjunction?", the reply is likely be a Schoolhouse Rock song, "Conjunction, junction, what's your function, hookin' up words, and phrases and all kinds of things."

Were you to ask "How does a bill go through congress?" They'd sing "I'm just bill on Capital Hill".

From the 70's and early 80's, Schoolhouse Rock stands as a potent reminder of the power of television to teach children.

But 1980 was also the year that the positive evolution ground to a halt. There was change here in Washington. While the FCC fostered deregulation, President Reagan said, "Well, let's let the broadcasters do it themselves."

And, what did we broadcasters do? We undid the positive evolution. In the absence of impetus from Washington, my colleagues and I just didn't notice the weeds coming back into the garden, throughout the 80's.

Most of the effective short-form educational programs died. Children's specials diminished. And by 1990 the three network combined weekly average was down from 11 1/4 hours in 1980 to 1 3/4 hours in 1990.

Now, thanks to concern by a new Whitehouse, Congress and this FCC, broadcasters are once again sensitized to issues of children's television.

My study for the 1994/95 Children's Season shows that the three original commercial networks will present a combined weekly average of 5 3/4 hours of educational children's programming starting this fall. Add Fox, and the weekly average among four networks will be up to 9 hours. Not bad.

My final point is this: Everyone agrees on the power of television to teach.

At the same time, most of us have heard about how our children stack up against schoolkids in other countries.



The Educational Testing Service's report among 15 nations, ranks children of the United States next to last in math. Second from last in science.

But I wonder. Is it possible for us to employ the power of television, to help remedy the educational deficits of our kids?

Is it possible for the FCC to form an advisory task force, made up of persons like those of us here, to serve as a bridge between the commission, and broadcasters, to encourage voluntary action?

Is it possible for the FCC to offer incentives, such as tax certificates to those who produce programs which serve specific educational needs of our children?

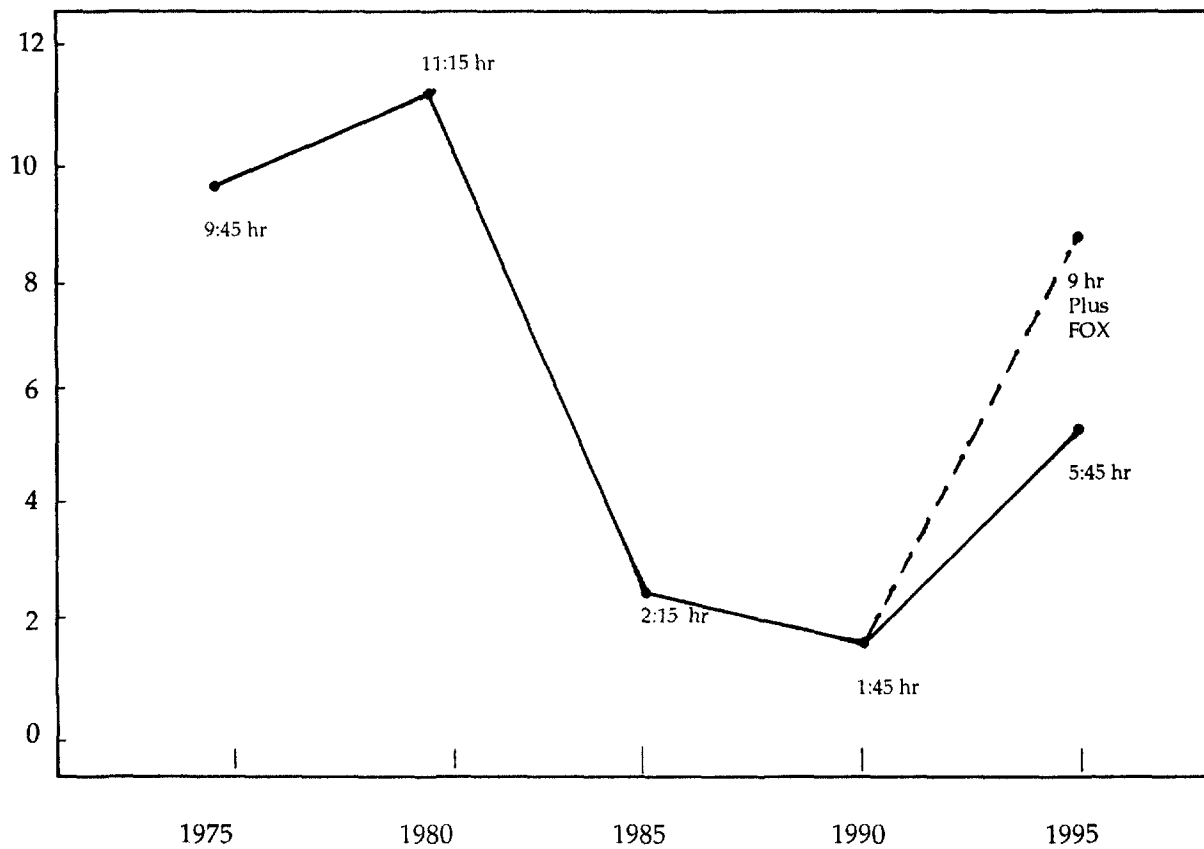
In that ETS study of 15 nations, American kids do rank first in one thing: the amount of time they watch TV. I see that as an opportunity. The opportunity for American television to help teach kids.

And I volunteer my energies to support such an effort.

# Average Combined Weekly Educational Television For Children

— ABC/CBS/NBC 1975 to 1995

- - - Plus FOX 1995



Nixon/Ford/Carter

Reagan

Bush

Clinton

CHILDREN 2-11  
SHARE OF VIEWING  
Monday - Sunday 6AM - 6AM

	<u>November 1993</u>	<u>February 1994</u>	<u>Average</u>
COMMERCIAL (ABC/CBS/NBC/FOX/Independents)	61	63	62
PUBLIC	8	7	8
CABLE ORIGINATION (Basic Cable)	26	25	26
PAY SERVICES	6	6	6

Source: Nielsen Total Viewing Resources Report